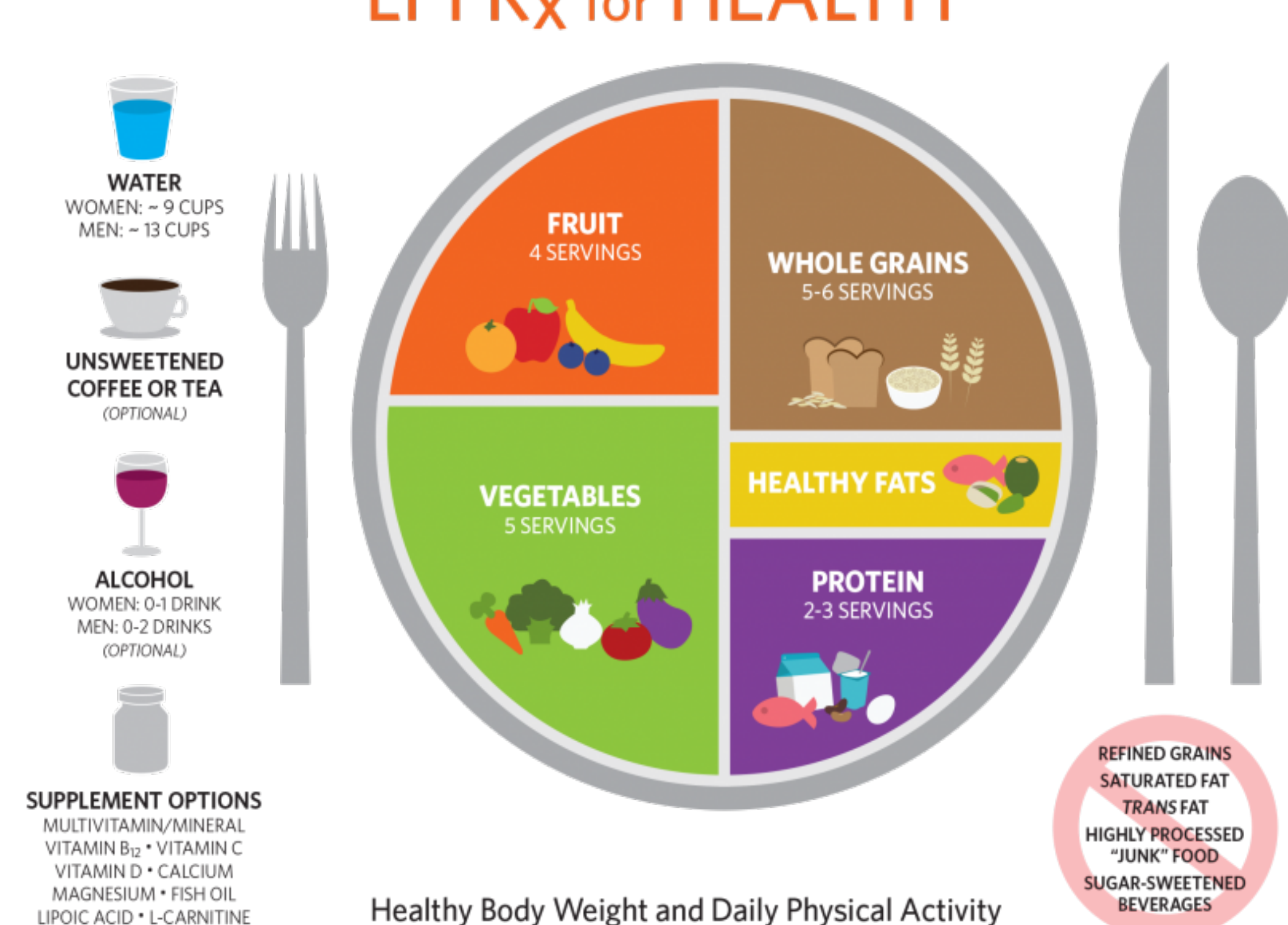


Rx for Health

The recommendations below are meant for generally healthy individuals interested in achieving or maintaining optimum health and preventing chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke), type 2 diabetes, cancer, and osteoporosis. More detailed information regarding deficiencies of and requirements for specific nutrients is available on the Linus Pauling Institute's [Micronutrient Information Center](#).

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Healthy Eating

- Balance your energy intake with physical activity: calorie-rich food should be consumed in moderation. Don't drink your calories: avoid calorie-rich beverages.
- Eat four servings (2 cups) of fruit and five servings (2½ cups) of vegetables daily but don't include potatoes in your tally; eat a variety of fruit and vegetables daily. Frozen vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh vegetables. [More on fruit and vegetables](#)
- Drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated. Unsweetened coffee and tea are also good beverage choices, keeping in mind that both contain caffeine ([More on coffee and tea](#)). Choose low-fat dairy or soy milk, avoid sugary soft drinks and energy drinks, and limit your intake of 100% fruit or vegetable juice to 1 cup daily.
- Increase your intake of omega-3 fats by eating fish twice weekly and consuming food rich in α -linolenic acid, such as walnuts, flaxseeds, and flaxseed or canola oil. [More on omega-3 fats](#)
- Reduce your intake of food high in saturated fat, such as red meat, whole milk, and full-fat yogurt or cheese; substitute soft margarine spreads for butter.
- Increase your intake of choline by eating food like eggs, seafood, meat, poultry, beans, mushrooms, cauliflower, broccoli, and nuts. [More on choline](#)
- Choose sources of unsaturated fats, such as nuts, olives, or avocados, and use soy, corn, safflower, or olive oil for cooking and salad dressings.
- Reduce your intake of white potatoes, white flour, and white rice by substituting whole-grain products, such as whole-wheat flour and pasta, whole-grain bread and cereal, and brown rice. [More on whole grains](#)
- Choose a variety of lean and low-fat protein sources, such as seafood, eggs, meat, poultry, dairy products, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and soy products.
- Reduce your exposure to food-borne carcinogens, avoid smoked or cured foods and charred or seared fish, meat, and poultry.
- Avoid highly processed, nutrient-poor food, such as cookies, candies, chips, crackers, processed meats and sugar-coated breakfast cereal, which are typically high in sugar, saturated fat, *trans* fat*, or sodium.

*Although the "Nutrition Facts" label may state that a food is "Not a significant source of trans fat," if "partially hydrogenated" vegetable oil is listed under ingredients, the food may contain up to 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving.

Healthy Lifestyle

- Aim for a healthy weight and waist circumference (40 inches or less for men and 35 inches or less for women). Being overweight or obese increases your risk for many chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease; colorectal, breast and other cancers; and type 2 diabetes. If you are overweight or obese, even a 10% weight loss can help lower your chronic disease risk.
- Limit sedentary behavior, such as prolonged sitting or TV viewing. Get at least 150 minutes or moderate or 75 minutes or vigorous aerobic activity each week. Aerobic activity for at least 10 minutes at a time will count toward your goal. Add muscle-strengthening activities, such as weight lifting or push-ups, at least twice weekly.
- Make every effort to quit if you smoke. Even if you have smoked for many years, quitting dramatically decreases risk for chronic diseases. [Smoking cessation resources](#)
- Moderate alcohol consumption is associated with reduced risk for cardiovascular disease but increased risk for some cancers. If you drink alcohol, limit your consumption to one alcoholic drink per day for women and two for men. Avoid alcohol if you have a personal or family history of breast or colon cancer or alcoholism. [More on alcohol](#)
- Take a daily multivitamin/mineral supplement and consider taking additional dietary supplements, as described below. [More on multivitamin/mineral supplements](#)

Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

Take a multivitamin/mineral supplement (MVM) with 100% of the Daily Value (DV) for most vitamins and essential minerals, keeping the following recommendations in mind:

- Vitamin A: Look for an MVM containing no more than 2,500 IU (750 µg) of vitamin A, unless any extra amount is in the form of β -carotene. Smokers should not take supplemental β -carotene. [More on vitamin A](#)
- Vitamin B₁₂: Poor absorption of vitamin B₁₂ is common among older adults. Adults older than 50 years should take 100 to 400 µg of supplemental vitamin B₁₂ daily. [More on vitamin B₁₂](#)
- Vitamin C: Aim for a daily intake of at 400 mg. Five servings of fruit and vegetables generally provide about 150 to 200 mg, especially if vitamin C-rich fruits (e.g., citrus fruit, kiwifruit) are consumed. [More on vitamin C](#)
- Vitamin D: Take 2,000 IU (50 µg) of supplemental vitamin D daily. Sun exposure, which varies with latitude and season, is the primary source of vitamin D, but sunscreen blocks skin synthesis of the vitamin. People with dark-colored skin, older adults, and obese individuals are especially at risk for low vitamin D levels. [More on vitamin D](#)
- Vitamin K: Some MVMs do not contain 100% of the DV for vitamin K. Aim for a daily intake of 120 µg for men and 90 µg for women. The best sources for vitamin K are green leafy vegetables, naturally fermented food, and vegetable oils. [More on vitamin K](#)
- Calcium: No MVM contains 100% of the DV for calcium. Aim for a daily intake of 1,000 mg. Dairy products, fortified beverages, and legumes are good sources of calcium. If your total calcium intake from your MVM and diet is inadequate, take a calcium supplement with a meal to make up the difference. To maximize the absorption, take no more than 500 mg at a time. [More on calcium](#)
- Iron: In general, men and postmenopausal women should avoid taking an MVM containing iron. If you are anemic, consult your physician. [More on iron](#)
- Magnesium: No MVM contains 100% of the DV for magnesium. Aim for a daily intake of about 400 mg for men and 300 mg for women. Green leafy vegetables, whole grains, and nuts are good sources of magnesium. If your total magnesium intake from your MVM and diet is inadequate, take a magnesium supplement to make up the difference. Avoid taking more than 350 mg per day of supplemental magnesium. [More on magnesium](#)
- Potassium: No MVM contains 100% of the DV for potassium. Aim for a daily intake of 4,700 mg. Potassium is abundant in fruit and vegetables. Low-sodium and no-sodium salt substitutes also contain potassium. [More on potassium](#)

Other Supplements

- Fish Oil: If you don't regularly consume fish, consider taking a two-gram fish oil supplement several times a week. If you are prone to bleeding or take anticoagulant drugs, consult your physician. [More on omega-3 fats](#)
- Lipoic Acid and L-Carnitine: Adults over the age of 50 may consider a daily supplement of 200-400 mg of α -lipoic acid and 500-1,000 mg of acetyl-L-carnitine. [More on lipoic acid and L-carnitine](#)

Supplement Tips

- Information about the quality and composition of dietary supplements can be found at [consumerlab.com](#).
- To ensure quality, purity, and potency, buy US Pharmacopeia (USP) grade supplements. Look for a "USP Verified" mark on the label.
- Don't store your supplements in the refrigerator, bathroom, or other humid environment; store them in a cool, dark place.
- For best absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, an MVM should be taken with a meal containing fat.
- Except for vitamin E and folic acid, there is no difference between natural and synthetic vitamins. Synthetic vitamin E is about 50% natural vitamin E (*d*- α -tocopherol). Folic acid, the form of the B vitamin used in supplements and food fortification, is more bioavailable than folate, which is found in food.
- Although vitamin E is a family of four tocopherols and four tocotrienols, *d*- α -tocopherol is the only form retained by the body.
- If you take large amounts of vitamin C daily, take them in divided doses to maintain consistently high plasma concentrations.
- Micronutrients and dietary factors may affect the action of drugs, and drugs may affect micronutrient status. For example, people using proton-pump inhibitor drugs or antacids for heartburn may be at increased risk for vitamin B₁₂ deficiency.
- The Linus Pauling Institute does not make recommendations for herbal supplements, which have no nutritional value.

Disclaimer

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